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1. (AMENDED) A method of generating a coloured or shaded texture for images, the images to be displayed on a display device or printed, the method including the steps of:

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- (a) providing a plurality of shape elements, each shape element defining a surface;
 - (b) providing each of the shape elements with an opacity which varies over its surface;
 - (c) arranging the shape elements in an overlapping fashion to fill a predetermined region of said images such that the region has a substantially uniform opacity; and
 - (d) rendering the shape elements for output to a printer or display device, such that the overlapping opacities generate a coloured or shaded texture.

2. (AMENDED) A method according to claim 1, wherein the shape elements are regular geometric shapes.

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7. (AMENDED) A method according to claim 1, further including the step of assigning a focal point to each of the shape elements, wherein the opacity of each shape element varies with distance from the focal point.

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24. (AMENDED) Apparatus for generating a coloured or shaded texture for images, the images to be displayed on a display device or printed, the apparatus including:

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(a) means for providing a plurality of shape elements, each of the shape elements defining a surface and having an opacity which varies across the surface;

(b) means for arranging the shape elements in an overlapping fashion on a background page to fill a predetermined region of said images such that the region has a substantially uniform opacity;

(c) means for rendering the shape elements such that the overlapping opacities generate a coloured or shaded texture;

(d) means for outputting the coloured or shaded texture to a printer display device.

27. (AMENDED) Apparatus according to claim 22, further including assignment means for assigning a focal point to each of the shape elements, such that the opacity of each shape element varies with distance from the focal point.

28. (AMENDED) Apparatus according to claim 27, wherein the assignment means assigns the focal points to areas within the respective shape elements.

29. (AMENDED) A method of producing a printed product including a laminar substrate formed from paper, card or other reproduction medium, the method including the steps of:

(a) providing a plurality of shape elements, each shape element defining a surface;

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- (b) providing each of the shape elements with an opacity which varies across said surface;
 - (c) arranging the shape elements in an overlapping fashion to fill a predetermined region of said printed product such that said region has a substantially uniform opacity;
 - (d) rendering the shape elements such that the overlapping opacities generate a coloured or shaded texture; and
 - (e) printing or otherwise applying the coloured or shaded texture to the laminar substrate.

30. (AMENDED) A computer storage medium bearing one or more computer software programs for execution on a computer, the computer software program or programs including compiled or uncompiled software instructions for implementing a method of generating a coloured or shaded texture to be displayed on a display device, stored or printed, including instructions for implementing the following steps:

- (a) providing a plurality of shape elements, each shape element defining a surface;
- (b) providing each of the shape elements with an opacity which varies across said surface;
- (c) arranging the shape elements in an overlapping fashion to fill a predetermined region such that the region has a substantially uniform opacity;
- (d) rendering the shape elements such that the overlapping opacities generate a coloured or shaded texture.